647 631 Service and beginners in the B.C.S. II. It entailed the charge of a unit of administration known as the township, a collection of village tracts, with headquarters at a town of about two to five thousand inhabitants. The township officer supervised the administration of villages and the land system, helped in the suppression of crime and revenue collection, acted as government registrar, and carried out duties assigned to him by his senior officer. This was the Sub-divisional officer, in charge of two or three townships. Two or three sub-divisions were in turn grouped into a district under a Deputy Commissioner, a post attainable by members of the B.C.S. II before their term of service if they showed talent, but more often held by members of the B. C. S. I. Three to eight districts were grouped in divisions under a Divisional Commissioner who had civil and revenue powers and was responsible to the Governor for every department of public service except special branches directly under the control of the central government. There were eight Divisions in Burma.

When my father was an S.D.O. he had various magisterial, civil and revenue powers. Besides exercising these duties in the sub-divisional headquarters, he toured around the sub-division for about ten days in the month and we sometimes accompanied him. When he was stationed at Myanaung we went to Ingabu where my mother had good friends, Pauktaing where there was a great and revered Image of Buddha, Kyangin which had a thriving silk-weaving industry. In a township headquarters like Kyangin we met only the Township Officer although the town was divided into blocks or wards, each of which was under a headman whom my father also had to meet.

647 631 177, 63 621 But in a village like Pauktaing we came directly into contact with the headman, the *thugyi* or "elder person", who, as a source of local authority over villagers, is a carry over of the administrative system under the Burmese kings. The headmen in those days were properly described by their name of thugyi. They were chosen by the villagers and assisted in their duties by a group of elders. The headman distributed the burden of the revenue that was due from the village among the villagers and collected it, being allowed a percentage of the collections. He was the village magistrate and sometimes the village judge. New settlers in the village had to obtain his permission to take up abode. The office tended to become hereditary, and in those times when there was little contact between the central government and the local administration of the peasantry, the authority of a good headman was a strong influence that extended over more than one village. In present times, however, each village has been established as a separate administrative unit under one headman; the Township Officer, the Sub-divisional

Officer have appeared as higher sources of authority which are present not far away, and the village headman has lost much of his standing as elder person responsible for law and order, retaining chiefly his position as tax-collector. This is to the loss of village administration.

As a-so-ya mins, men like my father had more power and prestige than they had money. The salary of a B.C.S. II Officer, which ranged from Rs. 300/- to Rs. 900/-, was enough to ensure easy living and a certain amount of saving for old age, but in the place of the expensive carpets, glass, silver, uniformed servants and tinned foods which we saw in English officials' houses, they had to spend what might seem to foreigners a disproportionate amount on two items: jewellery for the women and financial help to relatives. Jewellery is not a vanity for a Burmese woman but an article of dress, worn both day and night, in varying degrees according to whether she is working or out on pleasure. The word for jewellery does not include any description of gems, but is *let-wut let-sa*: wear for the arms and such. When servant girls enter a household the humblest of them is given a gold chain to hang around her neck or a bangle for her wrist. Thus among the classes who have any money to spare beyond that for mere sustenance, from the more affluent cultivators, the small traders and shopkeepers and clerks, to "rich" land-owners, mill-owners and government officials, a great amount of money is spent on jewellery. Not to have any would be an unbearable shame.

A complete set of jewellery for a well-dressed woman comprises the following articles, all worn together when attending shinbyus, ear-boring and marriage ceremonies, official functions and numerous other occasions. For the hair a *sado*, a hairpin with a single large diamond on the end; a comb with teeth of gold and a row of diamonds set closely along the back of the rim; a *sein-pan gaing*, a gold hairpin with a cluster of flowers to hang and dangle, set with diamonds. These articles have the gold parts embedded in the knot of hair and only show the diamonds. Round the neck are worn the *lè-gat*, a narrow gold collar set widely with diamonds, fitting like a vice; below this a double row of small pearls tied tightly behind with red tassels; the *lè-ton* "trembling necklace"—a "choker" necklace—sitting so that little chains set with diamonds hang from it all round the neck and tremble; a chain with a diamond locket below this. In the ears are worn single diamond studs. On the jacket five diamond buttons, attached to gold rings set with diamonds, fasten the button loops. On the wrists and hands diamond bracelets and as many rings as possessed, of rubies, emeralds and sapphires set with diamonds are worn. A young girl also wears hollow anklets of gold round her ankles. In addition to the above, the richer minkadaws and wives of big traders possess corresponding pieces of rubies, emeralds and

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On February 18, 1950, on arriving in the village early in the morning for
our usual daily period of observation and interviewing concerning village life, 175
we were immediately struck by the absence of villagers going to and fro in their
daily tasks and by the deadly silent atmosphere pervading the whole village scene.
On the veranda of one house located just across the bridge leading into the
village a large number of people was assembled. An informant related that on
the previous evening, about eleven o'clock, some fifteen armed bandits carrying
automatic weapons as well as small arms came via Pazundaung Creek and invaded
the village. Firing their guns into the air to frighten the people, they
proceeded directly to the house where the large gathering was now assembled and
demanded Rs. 1000 in cash and ten ticals of gold. When the head of the household
protested that he did not have that much, they took him to the ricefields, bound
his feet, and shot him to death. They also visited another home and made demands
upon the woman who was the head of the household. When money was not forthcoming,
they tied up the members of the family, struck the woman on the head, and removed
all the clothing in the house except that being worn. Although the police were
notified immediately after this attack upon the village, they did not come to
investigate until many hours later. Villagers expected no real assistance from
the authorities, whom they considered incompetent and afraid of bandits. The
village headman said that although he suspected that there were accomplices
among the villagers, he was afraid to name these suspects to the police, lest
revenge be taken upon himself and his family.

This event, climaxing a series of attacks upon the village within the past 621 ●
year, set in motion a number of actions which are interesting for what they 674
reveal of the social structure of the village as well as for the light they
throw on intergroup relations.

The village headman, who had spoken of the need for the community to arm
itself, and of the high cost of doing so, decided that a village meeting should
be called to consider the matter.

A few days after the murder described above, the meeting was called. Early
one morning the village crier went through the community sounding a gong and
summoning the people to the school-house. Within an hour some fifty villagers
arrived. As the group slowly gathered, several men came to tell the headman
that their gardening or other work was urgent and asked to be excused.

As the meeting began, the elders sat on the veranda of the school-house,
surrounding the headman, who sat at the schoolmaster's desk. A good deal of
informal discussion took place between the elders and the headman before the
meeting was called to order, and it was at this point that actual decision
making was doubtless done.

The headman opened the meeting formally by addressing the assembled group,
telling them that he was sure they were tired of the attacks upon the village
and that they wanted to take action; that there was no future for them so long
as they remained defenseless; and that once the rainy season came, it would
not even be possible to flee during an attack. Although he could have made
a decision in consultation with the elders, the headman told the gathering, he
had called a general meeting because he wanted to be sure the community would
support him in any course of action he might take.

The headman now proposed that a fund be raised for the purchase of arms
and a plan formulated for defending the village. Since the idea of a common

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621 674 fund, which he had broached informally on past occasions, did not meet with enthusiasm, the headman suggested that the village be divided into territorial units, and that each unit be responsible for raising its own money for arms and for deciding on the custody of its weapons. He called for volunteers from the elders to take responsibility for soliciting funds from inhabitants of their respective areas.

The headman's speech was met with total silence for a time, followed by a great deal of whispered conversation among various small groups. At this point the eldest man in Tadagale, himself a retired headman and a relative of the present headman, exhorted, 'Speak out your thoughts. It is not good to keep things bottled up within yourselves.' The headman now told the group that as their representative he could do nothing unless they wished it.

As hushed conversations continued among the assembled villagers, the headman and elders proceeded to talk among themselves for several minutes. It was then and there decided that each household would be asked to contribute what it could afford; no fixed assessment would be levied. A household too poor to contribute to its unit fund would be expected to help in the event that an attack occurred. Since some elders objected to giving assistance to any unit which chose not to arm or could not afford to, it was decided that armed groups would not come to their aid. Now another call for volunteers to raise funds was made by the headman, and several elders offered their services. The headman asked them to make every effort to persuade people to contribute.

623 If we may digress for a moment, this village meeting is instructive in showing how authority is exercised and decision making takes place in the community. The traditional emphasis upon the wisdom and authority of age is seen in the fact that only the elders spoke in the meeting, although the headman presumably called the meeting, in the first place, to mobilize village-wide support and tried to evoke expressions of opinion. An informant questioned later about the meeting said, 'It is not customary for the younger people to voice their opinions or take part in the discussion during a meeting. The elders do that.' The idea of a free give-and-take discussion is almost totally foreign to these peasants, who live but a few miles from Rangoon, a center of diffusion for western concepts and practices.

621 563 To return to the bearing of the above described meeting on Indian-Burmese relations in the village. During the meeting the question arose whether the Indians would be asked to contribute to the fund for purchasing arms, to which the headman answered in the affirmative. At that point one man quipped, 'Of course they must contribute; they have thousands of rupees.' [The meeting was concerned with defending the village against bandits, i.e. dacoits.]

Two spokesmen for the Indians were present. The village headman explained to them that those who lived towards the northern end of the village would be included in a nearby unit for defense purposes, while the others could contribute their money directly to him. Then, half in jest, he said that each Indian household should give the cost of one gun. Somewhat irritated, one of the Indian spokesmen said that if need be he was willing to pay for five guns, but the question he wanted answered was who would have custody of the weapons. The headman was extremely hesitant to answer and the Indians left the meeting without a definite answer.

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So matters rested for about two weeks. On March 7th the Indian quarter of the village was suddenly the scene of intense activity. Houses and barns were being dismantled and ox carts and motor trucks were being loaded with animal fodder and dismantled buildings. The normally quiet Indian community was a beehive of activity. Quite without warning, the Indians were leaving Tadagale en masse. Eagerly we sought out Indian informants to determine what had happened.

An Indian woman tearfully related her version of events:

> The Burmese want the Indians of the village to pay 1,150 rupees for guns to defend the community. How can we afford that amount? Our money has all been spent buying hay. Besides, we Indians are not wanted in this village. We have been abused and threatened; men have walked into my house carrying sticks and pieces of iron and have kicked the dogs. We can't afford to move; it costs 20 rupees to have a house dismantled, 10 rupees to have it transported, and 60 rupees to have it erected again. We will be heavily in debt by the time the move is over. But we Indians prefer to move because the Burmese here are bad. Last night I saw one of them trying to steal chickens from his neighbor's house.

An Indian man expressed himself with great agitation and feeling:

> These people think that when we come to Burma we take leave of our senses. We raise the money; we buy the guns; the licenses are in our names, but they keep custody of the guns. What could we do if they sold the guns, or just kept them and told us they were stolen? We would be in trouble with the police. Would they believe us if we told them we gave the guns to the Burmese and the Burmese denied it?
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> There is no justice left in Burma. At least under the British Raj everyone was equal before the law in India and Burma. But now that the Burmese are in power they are loath to punish their own people. An Indian in Yegu caught a Burmese trying to rob his house. The magistrate sentenced him merely for having a gun without a license and he went free in two days.

According to the same informant, in the two days since the Indians had decided to leave Tadagale, the Burmese had rifled the house of one of them. This was confirmed by other Indians, who expressed their feelings about the Burmese of the village in similar vein. At one point in an interview with one of the Indians, a Burmese woman passed and picked up some sticks and bamboo poles at the site of a dismantled Indian house. The Indian said, with great bitterness, 'If a Burmese can pick up free a pinch of dirt which belongs to an Indian he is delirious with joy; he thinks he has gotten the better of an Indian.

Further inquiries indicated that the Indians of Tadagale were moving to a nearby community, where the Indian minority was considerably larger than in Tadagale. Although they admitted there was danger of banditry there, too, and that the Burmese might not be friendly, they felt that where there were larger numbers of Indians there was less chance of abuse by the Burmese. Many Burmese in Tadagale, according to the Indians, had begged them to re-

consider, because they did not want to lose the Indians as customers for their paddy stalk and as a source of manure for their gardens and fields.

The headman of Tadagale, when queried as to the reasons for the departure of the Indians, shrugged his shoulders and said simply that they were afraid, despite the plans for village defense, that their animals might be injured in the event of any fighting between villagers and bandits.

Within a few days, the Indians of Tadagale had all departed; and in the vacant spaces where their houses had stood, the Burmese were eagerly at work erecting buildings of their own.

Social Change

Prior to effective British rule in Lower Burma (about 1830), the local autonomous unit was the village circle, consisting of several villages under the authority of a headman. The office of headman seems to have been hereditary in fact, although elections were held. That is to say, headmen tended to be elected in a particular lineage. Rule was through personal relationship between the headman and the villagers. Under the circle headman was a council of elders, appointed by him, one from each village in the circle. Disputes were almost entirely settled by arbitration and compromise, rather than with any concern over the abstract legal right and wrong of the case.

Within the village, a system called 'ten-house heads' was operative. This system appears to have been operative through British times, but at least since 1948 has lost effectiveness. Tadagale houses are strung out along a main path, and the ten-house division is such that the houses belonging to one group are mostly contiguous. The head of each ten-house section acted as a kind of deputy to the headman and sat on the council of elders.

With the coming of British rule, much of this changed. They established a hierarchical system, in which there were, in descending order of size, nation, division, district, township, village circle, and village. All officials at each level were appointed from the capital, even down to the village level, where the headman was made an appointed civil servant. He was paid on a percentage basis of his total tax collections and fines levied. The circle headman had police power and judicial authority in petty crimes.

A judicial system was introduced by the British to replace the old informal arbitration. With an almost total disregard for indigenous institutions and customs, the British established a territorial system based upon law. The loosely structed and informal system of old gradually broke down.

Early in 1948 Burma gained her independence. Since that time the country has been in a state of disorganization. The civil strife has brought about an almost complete breakdown of administrative function on many levels. Certainly the ties of the village with higher units have been curtailed. One indication of this is the fact that the headman no longer submits reports with any degree of regularity to higher echelons, as was required under British rule. Even the local ten-house heads council has largely ceased to function. It exists, but is scarcely used.

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understand that soul can doubt. And a soul is worth very many governments. 642

But when you left the central government, and came down to the management of local affairs, there was a great change. You came straight down from the king and governor to the village and its headman. There were no lords, no squires, nor ecclesiastical power wielding authority over the people. 621

Each village was to a very great extent a self-governing community composed of men free in every way. The whole country was divided into villages, sometimes containing one or two hamlets at a little distance from each other—offshoots from the parent stem. The towns, too, were divided into quarters, and each quarter had its headman. These men held their appointment-orders from the king as a matter of form, but they were chosen by their fellow-villagers as a matter of fact. Partly this headship was hereditary, not from father to son, but it might be from brother to brother, and so on. It was not usually a very coveted appointment, for the responsibility and trouble were considerable, and the pay small. It was 10 per cent. on the tax collections. And with this official as their head, the villagers managed nearly all their affairs. Their taxes, for instance, they assessed and collected themselves. The governor merely informed the headman that he was to produce ten rupees per house from his village. The villagers then appointed assessors from among themselves, and decided how much each household should pay. Thus a coolie might pay but four rupees, and a rice- 622 651 621

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651 merchant as much as fifty or sixty. The assessment
621 was levied according to the means of the villagers. So well was this done, that complaints against the decisions of the assessors were almost unknown—I might, I think, safely say were absolutely unknown. The assessment was made publicly, and each man was heard in his own defence before being assessed. Then the money was collected. If by any chance, such as death, any family could not pay, the deficiency was made good by the other villagers in proportion. When the money was got in it was paid to the governor.

674 Crime such as gang-robbery, murder, and so on,
627 had to be reported to the governor, and he arrested
177 the criminals if he felt inclined, and knew who they were, and was able to do it. Generally something was in the way, and it could not be done. All lesser crime was dealt with in the village itself, not only dealt with when it occurred, but to a great extent prevented from occurring. You see, in a village anyone knows everyone, and detection is usually easy. If a man became a nuisance to a village, he was expelled. I have often heard old Burmans talking about this, and comparing these times with those. In those times all crimes were unpunished, and there was but little petty crime. Now all big criminals are relentlessly hunted down by the police; and the inevitable weakening of the village system has led to a large increase of petty crime, and certain breaches of morality and good conduct. I remember talking to a man not long ago—a man who had been a headman in the king's time, but was not so now. We were chatting of

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various subjects, and he told me he had no children; they were dead.

'When were you married?' I asked, just for something to say, and he said when he was thirty-two.

'Isn't that rather old to be just married?' I asked. 'I thought you Burmans often married at eighteen and twenty. What made you wait so long?'

And he told me that in his village men were not allowed to marry till they were about thirty. 'Great harm comes,' he said, 'of allowing boys and girls to make foolish marriages when they are too young. It was never allowed in my village.'

'And if a young man fell in love with a girl?' I asked.

'He was told to leave her alone.'

'And if he didn't?'

'If he didn't, he was put in the stocks for one day or two days, and if that was no good, he was banished from the village.'

A monk complained to me of the bad habits of the young men in villages. 'Could government do nothing?' he asked. They used shameful words, and they would shout as they passed his monastery, and disturb the lads at their lessons and the girls at the well. They were not well-behaved. In the Burmese time they would have been punished for all this—made to draw so many buckets of water for the school-gardens, or do some road-making, or even be put in the stocks. Now the headman was afraid to do anything, for fear of the great government It was very bad for the young men, he said.

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621 626 All villages were not alike, of course, in their enforcement of good manners and good morals, but, still, in every village they were enforced more or less. The opinion of the people was very decided, and made itself felt, and the influence of the monastery without the gate was strong upon the people.

626 792 Yet the monks never interfered with village affairs. As they abstained from state government, so they did from local government. You never could imagine a Buddhist monk being a magistrate for his village, taking any part at all in municipal affairs. The same reasons that held them from affairs of the state held them from affairs of the commune. I need not repeat them. The monastery was outside the village, and the monk outside the community. I do not think he was ever consulted about any village matters. I know that, though I have many and many a time asked monks for their opinion to aid me in deciding little village disputes, I have never got an answer out of them. 'These are not our affairs,' they will answer always. 'Go to the people; they will tell you what you want.' Their influence is by example and precept, by teaching the laws of the great teacher, by living a life blameless before men, by preparing their souls for rest. It is a general influence, never a particular one. If anyone came to the monk for counsel, the monk would only repeat to him the sacred teaching, and leave him to apply it.

621 So each village managed its own affairs, untroubled by squire or priest, very little troubled by the state. That within their little means they did

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it well, no one can doubt. They taxed themselves without friction, they built their own monastery schools by voluntary effort, they maintained a very high, a very simple, code of morals, entirely of their own initiative.

All this has passed, or is passing away. The king has gone to a banishment far across the sea, the ministers are either banished or powerless for good or evil. It will never rise again, this government of the king, which was so bad in all it did, and only good in what it left alone. It will never rise again. The people are now part of the British Empire, subjects of the Queen. What may be in store for them in the far future no one can tell, only we may be sure that the past can return no more. And the local government is passing away, too. It cannot exist with a strong government such as ours. For good or for evil, in a few years it, too, will be gone.

But, after all, these are but forms; the soul is far within. In the soul there will be no change. No one can imagine even in the far future any monk of the Buddha desiring temporal power, or interfering in any way with the government of the people. That is why I have written this chapter, to show how Buddhism holds itself towards the government. With us, we are accustomed to ecclesiastics trying to manage affairs of state, or attempting to grasp the secular power. It is in accordance with our ideals that they should do so. Our religious phraseology is full of such terms as lord and king and ruler and servant. Buddhism knows nothing of any of them. In our religion we

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ness. Can there be a more valuable knowledge for anyone than this?

In many ways she will act for her husband with vigour and address, and she is not afraid of appearing in his name or her own in law courts, for instance, or in transacting certain kinds of business. She knows that she can do certain business as well as or better than her husband, and she does it. There is nothing more remarkable than the way in which she makes a division of these matters in which she can act for herself, and those in which, if she act at all, it is for her husband.

Thus, as I have said, she will, as regards her own property or her own business, act freely in her own name, and will also frequently act for her husband too. They will both sign deeds, borrow money on joint security, lend money repayable to them jointly. But in public affairs she will never allow her name to appear at all. Not that she does not take a keen interest in such things. She lives in no world apart; all that affects her husband interests her as keenly as it does him. She lives in a world of men and women, and her knowledge of public affairs, and her desire and powers of influencing them, is great. But she learnt long ago that her best way is to act through and by her husband, and that his strength and his name are her bucklers in the fight. Thus women are never openly concerned in any political matters. How strong their feeling is can better be illustrated by a story than in any other way.

In 1889 I was stationed far away on the north-west frontier of Burma, in charge of some four thousand square miles of territory which had been

MEK

Work in Pathee

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U Myaing is an IN fisherman and in normal times he is helped by his family in catching and preparing fish. Another source of revenue is also renting out oxen and the making of mats usually relied on only when there is little other work. He regards himself as "one who works INS on a large scale", and on further questioning it appears that he was a sort of foreman working with a group of IN fishermen. About 95 other workers in Pathee made their living by fishing and fish processing, but there were also some cultivators. In addition there were 9 or 10 in the paddy husking business, 4 or 5 merchants and one gardener. With these few introductory remarks let us examine in some detail the nature of IN fishing.

U Myaing describes the IN fishery of which he was a part as follows:-

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"The IN is located upstream about two miles from Pathee. The trap is remade every year and costs anywhere from Rs. 5000/- to Rs. 10,000/- to make. It takes twenty men about one month to make the trap. First we plant timber poles, after which we put up the YIN- strips of bamboo held together by coconut fibre rope, in such a manner as to present a large flat surface. When the YIN has been safely put up (across the entire width of the stream) the fish are carried down (by the current) through the SHAW (inclined plane of the sluice) and they are caught at the end. At the deep end the bamboo fence is about 16 taungs high and only a little of the poles remain above water. These poles have to propped up by other timber poles. Then the YIN are placed across these poles and tied in position. All the water has to flow along this small channel, and the force of the current washes up the fish (at the end of the SHAW). The poles are hammered down into the earth to a depth of one LAN (one yard) The water passes through the dam, but the fish cannot. The fish cannot swim upstream again because of the force of the water in the narrow sluice, which is only about eight taungs across. The length of the trap is approximately 100 feet whereas the width across the stream is 200 feet. When the floods are high at times the fish do get away. The water spills over and the fish do escape. We catch the remaining fish. When the water increases we have to extend the dam sideways a long way. But the height of the dam cannot be raised. In the dry season those fish which have gone over are left stranded outside the IN by the retreating waters. Some people fish below the dam with nets and fish hooks.

"When the rains come, that is the time they spawn. This time is called NGA-YIT-THI time. At this time the fish group together to go upstream. The better the rains, the better the catch. After these fish have passed, the MEK is closed. The fish spawn at the beginning of the rains after they have collect and passed upstream. At about the month of TAW-THA-LIN (last month of the rains season) the MEK is closed and the fish that come down with the force of the water are picked up. If many fish go upstream - fish that spawn, then we get a good catch. If only few spawning fish go up, we get a bad catch. Even

it out to dry in the sun throughout the next day, then pound again and store in jars. The total process takes two days."

U Myaing continues his explanation of the IN fishery:-

"The fishery is worked on a co-operative basis. We contribute equal sums of money. If one puts up Rs. 100/- all put up Rs.100/-; if Rs.1000/- all put up Rs.1000/- each. We group together and work. Rights to the site of the fishery must be secured from the government by auction. We have to make an initial payment of about Rs. 1000/- or Rs. 2000/- and in bidding among ourselves the price increases to eight thousand, nine thousand, ten thousand, twelve thousand. The original price was three thousand rupees. This is the cost of the Deputy Commissioner's auction. There were many bidders at the auction for the IN. Four, five, six. For example if I give a thousand rupees you offer two thousand, he gives three, four, five thousand ..... When it comes to the hand of the successful bidder the price has increased. The money for the fishery rights have to be paid in later (after the fishing has begun). For example if I pay in a thousand rupees this month, I pay a thousand the next month and the next, in several instalments. This is in addition to the amount we sink into the actual working of the business. (Cost of constructing the IN and equipment).

"The fishermen do not get paid a salary. They have shares. Accounts are kept of how much fish is caught, how much sold, and only after the IN has been worked to the end of the season is everything cleared up. Each fisherman gets only one share, and the profits are equally divided. We have to pay equal amounts of money for the IN and the money we get from the IN is the same for each of us. We all group and work together. There are some INS where one takes the lead and engages all the men and works it for himself. What he gets he keeps for himself. He pays the wages. In selling, we discuss the matter among ourselves and then sell. The four or five elders get together and if they decide to sell this kind of fish for this price, it is sold.

"As one of the elders, I go alone and bid at the auctioning in the Deputy Commissioner's office. I also supervise the actual fishing saying to the other fishermen - "Do this, and this and this." I have a list of what things they need and have to go and buy these things for them. I have to buy poles, I have to buy YIN bamboo, I have to buy all the implements which are to be used. I have to collect money, and buy all the implements used in the IN. I have to keep accounts for this. I get a bit more money (than the other fishermen) by making goods (from the profits of manufacture). You see, I also make dried Nga-gyi fish and Ngapi-daung. I buy the fish from them and process it. I have not worked at INS all my life. I worked for about ten years at the time when the British king reigned. When the Japanese came I worked at INS no longer."(He then bought fish and sold the preparations.)

U Myaing gives the following supplementary information:

" There are ten leaders or foremen in the village, each of them taking charge of about seven or eight men. In all there are about eighty workers in the three sub-villages of Patlwe working with me at our IN. About thirty or forty of these live in Ma-GYI-BET on our side of the river. These are men working at our IN only. There are also workers living in the village who work in the six other INS of the neighbourhood. About a hundred of the two hundred families in Ma-GYI-BET work INS. The rest produce the fish, dry it, make ngapi etc., and to do this they have to buy the fish from the IN workers. Afterwards they sell to buyers who come from Upper Burma. Or sometimes they go upcountry in boats and steamers to sell the produce. Some people who are not IN workers go to the INS and help to extract fish oil. Fish like Nga-Nyare-daung yeild about one viss of oil to every 10 viss of fish. The fish are cut open with a knife and the fat collected. The women come and help without payment and take home oil for themselves when they go back. The women of my household also used to do this.

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also used to do this. Sometimes they are able to extract about 5 viss of oil each in one day. 226 463 621

"There are also cultivators in the village. Some of those who work IRS also own fields. They rent out the land to tenants. There are altogether 12 people in our village who own cultivation fields. But the biggest landowner does not own lands more extensive than three hundred acres. Some own 40 or 50 acres. Some engage cultivators and work their fields themselves, while others rent out the fields for a certain percentage of the produce. 421 463 621 427

"There were paid workers in the IN. They were paid, not a daily wage, but a monthly salary of Rs. 30/- without food. About 50 of the 80 workers were paid workers, though some of them owned shares as well. In addition to their pay, these paid workers received quite a lot of fish which their families went around selling. They get one or two basket-loads of fish to sell, and in this way make quite a lot of money. 226 463 465

"Fish is not distributed in this manner every day - only when the fish start coming down in great numbers. On these occasions however the workers get about 25 to 30 viss each - that is, by the boatload. Ordinarily they are given just enough for one meal.

"I also own eleven cows; eight for loaning out to cultivators and three for breeding purposes. No milk is drawn for human consumption because that is not the custom in our native place." 231 [272]

One yoke of oxen hired out brought U Myaing 50 baskets of paddy a year. He had 4 yokes. They kept by 100 baskets for home consumption and sold the rest at a rate fluctuating between Rs. 100/- and Rs. 175/- per hundred baskets.

In those years when U Myaing works at IRS, he has to confine himself to such work only. During those years when he does not work at IRS, he buys the fish from IN workers and process them for sale as NGAGYI, NGA-CHAUK, etc. Each year he uses between four to five thousand fish. When U Myaing his co-workers could not get an IN, he had to buy fish and make NGA-CHAUK, (dried fish), NGAPI and NGANPYAR-YE. 226 463 433

On his former visits to Rangoon U Myaing came in a boat loaded with NGAGYI CHAUK (dried NGA GYI) and transferred it to the care of a broker in Rangoon. He then ascended the Shwe Dagon pagoda platform, donated money and water, returned to the broker, and went around the town to places like Mogul Street (the Indian quarter) for masts and sto pillar-rice etc. It took three or four days, and sometimes about ten days for the broker to dispose of his goods and in this time he would go round all the pagodas in Rangoon like the Botataung, Sule, Kyauk-htat-gyi etc. Once he went to a Chinese hotel known as the HAN-KIN hotel together with some traders from DANUBYU. They pooled the expenses. The journey home took a day and a night. He took back with him clothes, longyis, KINGYIS, durian fruit, 226 438 484 [778]

General Attitudes of the Burmese toward Work.

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Rank and status in the Burmese Village is determined to a large extent on the basis of occupation - with the factor of wealth where applicable taking precedence over occupation. The highest rank is accorded to the Buddhist monks who exert the ultimate influence. Government officials including the township officers, the THU GYI (headman) and elders, and the schoolmaster occupy the second rank. The large land owners (of this group the rice-mill owners rate highest) rank next. Below these are the tradesmen - the paddy dealers, shop keepers and small holdings farmers who comprise the bulk of the population. Professional artisans such as carpenters, blacksmiths, gold and silver smiths occupy a lower position. However, it is common for the small holdings farmers to practice a secondary occupation such as pottery making.

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Fishermen and hunters are looked down on by the rest of the community because they offend Buddhist precepts by taking life. In this class also are those who raise animals (cows, poultry, pigs) for food, smugglers and brewers. Fishermen, particularly those such as U Myaing who operate IN fisheries often become wealthy, but the stigma of the source of this wealth is remembered by the community.

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A story is told of a rich fisherman who came to cover the Shwe Dagon Pagoda in Rangoon with gold plate. Unfortunately, he had sinned so much by taking the lives of fish that he could not see the pagoda. In a rage he returned to his IN to cover its posts with the gold. Because of the stigma attached to fishing those who make their living in this way tend to live together in their own communities. Thus Pathae, U Myaing's village is primarily a fisherman's community.

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In the days of the Burmese kings, wealthy men and nobles (THAKIN) would assign people under their command to serve as pagoda slaves. Their names were engraved in stone and their descendants for all eternity assigned to this position. The duties were light - consisting mainly of sweeping the platforms and carrying for the images, but the social position was next to the lowest. It is believed that the flower vendors on the platform of the Rangoon

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families in Rangoon have worries of this kind - resolved by arrange-
ments with influence masters - usually undertaken by the wives of the
families. Ordinarily, violence is not premediated but spur-of-the-
moment actions based on passions. If ill-feeling grows gradually it [621] ●
is best handled through the influence masters. The function of this [682]
system in the village is to avoid open conflict that might prove dis-
asterous to the solidarity of the community (as say feuding families
in open warfare).

426 593 or her daughters or sons who are financially well-to-do. U Myaing's sister who lives in Rangoon has given help to the eldest daughter by housing her near her cheroot-rolling job. The pattern of mutual aid among the relatives is strongly developed among the Burmese. "A tree will support a thousand birds" emphasises the importance of the relative who makes good for the rest of the family.

Relationship of Family to Community and State

602 621 A large portion of the Pathee community were related to U Myaing. Consequently many reciprocal activities fell within the family group. Most of the activities were prescribed by virtue of being a member of the community rather than by kinship ties. Such activities include cooperation in house raisings, funerals, marriage festivals, SHIN PYU ceremonies where the family involved needs help. Unpleasant occasions such as funerals demand everyone's attendance if not financial participation. 602 621 476 [342] On pleasant occasions the participants are apt to be one's friends and relatives. When someone builds a small house or puts a new thatch roof on, the other villagers come to help. He does not have to pay the workers anything or even feed them. He has only to cook and prepare for them the raw foods and chillies, onions, etc., which each one brings for himself. This statement, however, holds true only when small houses are built. Regular carpenters have to be hired to build the big ones. U Myaing frequently helped to build other people's houses - small houses that could be completed in a day. Help of this nature is offered without asking.

764 621 476 When a person dies in the village, the villagers all go to the house and certain elders help to bathe and dress the corpse and place it on the bed, where it may be kept anywhere from three to seven days before being taken out and buried. The ground for burial is bought at the ceremony for the price of one pice. Now, in keeping with the general inflation, the price has risen to one anna. The grave is dug by the young men's group. The young men of the village carry the bier, or pull the bullock cart on which the coffin rests, and dig the grave. They also provide the orchestra. For performances on the night of the death and the day after a Burmese orchestra is engaged at the rate of Rs. 50/- to Rs. 100/-. The various visitors who come to condole with

the bereaved bring with them gifts of money and in this way seek to help them to defray the funeral expenses of which the funeral feast held 7 days after the death is most expensive. Sometimes these visitors are so generous that the householder does not need to contribute anything at all. Some people, however, prefer to reserve the right to pay for burial expenses of someone in the family, and put out an announcement requesting neighbours to refrain from making monetary contributions. 764 621● 476

The community activities in the refugee camp are mainly of an economic nature - discussed in the section on "Work". The solidarity of the village is lacking and the feelings of obligation and responsibility beyond the basic economic ones are absent. 621 722

In Pathne there are ethnic groups other than the Burmese. There are a few Karens, Indians of Madrasi affiliation, as well as a few Chinese who run stores. The attitude of the family toward these other groups are reflected in the following interview: (Note: the concept of "religion" is used here as meaning "general way of life." 621 563 186

Q. "Does U Myaing know about other religions such as Christianity and Hinduism? If so, what is his attitude towards them.

A. "I don't understand them well. We are with our own religion. We are country folk. We understand our religion only. We don't understand other religions.

Q. "What is your attitude towards other racial groups living in the village?

A. "I don't hold any positive attitude. I harbour no evil thoughts. We hold them to be the same as we are.

Q. "Would you like to go back to live among the Karens you spoke of just now?

A. (D.A.Z.) "Of course not. Lots of Burmese were left behind. We wouldn't dare to live among the Karens."
(U.M.) "Some people do not dare to live among the Karens, but we do."
(D.A.Z.) U.M.)"We don't have enemies."
(D.A.Z.) "There are Karens who are friendly with us."
(U.M.) "Say that we lived together. We lived together."
(D.A.Z.)"Though we have no enemies we feel afraid. In the present turmoil and confusion people no longer know each other."

Q. " Do the Karens differ from you in religion?"

A. (U.M.) "Our religions do not differ. The religion of Karens in our place and our religion do not differ. It is Buddhism."

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Q. "We want to know your relations with adherents of other religions. There are people who worship Indian gods, Chinese gods, and Christians - what is your attitude towards them?"

A. (U.M.) "I don't hold any attitude at all."

Q. " Do you get on well?"

A. (U.M.) "Yes. We get on very well. They buy our goods and we buy theirs. They rent our fields and cultivate them. If there are cows they are borrowed and lent. We live together like this - buying and selling."

Q. "This is about the people. How about their attitude towards their gods?"

A. "I have no attitude."

Q. "Have you never thought about it?"

A. "I have never thought about it. Their god is only slightly different. There is only one god. There will be only one god. Only people differ somewhat. Our outlook should be improved. After all, his god is my god and my god is his god. Only the races differ. Even one race is divided within itself."

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The relationship of the family to the state in Pathwe involve taxes, military service and voting. In the pre-war days, U Myaing and family had to pay a capitation tax, levied at the rate of Rs. 5/- per year for a married couple, and Rs. 2/8 per year for a bachelor of twenty and over. Children and unmarried women and widows are exempt from any tax whatsoever. There was a land tax on cultivation fields - levied at the rate of annas 2 per acre per annum, and also on garden land at one anna or two annas per acre per annum according to the value of the land. The tax on INS - or purchase of the fishery rights amounted to a figure anywhere between Rs. 3000/- and Rs. 12,000/-. U Myaing is not liable to taxes because of his low income, he retains his voting privileges for general elections.

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The family was moved from Pathwe to the refugee camp because of the insurrection and has been under the protection of the government since coming to camp. The proportion of food and shelter benefits, which they receive from the government, has been noted under those headings. According to government policy, shelter is provided for the family, and food for all except one adult who is expected to work.

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Education for U Myaing's children is provided by the government both in Pantanaw and in the refugee camp. Only the cost of the books has to be paid by him.

Children in the Pathwe village learnt their lessons at the government school. This school, which was on THA-GYI-BET side, teaches pupils up to the tenth standard. The school house was built by contributions taken in the village. When U Myaing was young, they had to pay a tuition fee of four annas each to the schoolmaster every month. Now government has taken over the cost of educating the children, and fees are no longer required of them. The children only have to bring their own books and pencils. There are three teachers in the school; one headmaster and two assistants. The headmaster draws a salary of Rs. 100/- and the assistants of over Rs. 90/- each. There are other schools across the river but they teach only up till the fourth standard, and children of higher grades have to come to THA-GYI-BET to attend school.

don't usually talk about these things with them. We invite the phongyis and worship them. We don't talk much with them. They preach the law and the 5 SILAS to us. 181 203

16. Q. Are there any persons of influence in camp who give advise on everyday living? 621

A. Yes, the person of influence is the schoolmaster, U Khant. But he only teaches the children and looks to the general cleanliness of the camp. Another person is the man who teaches the English. But they do not lay down what is right and what is wrong.

Activities of the Family in Relationship to the Supernatural.

The main forces which U Myaing and his family are concerned with 771 are those of the Nats and those of Buddhism. Speaking historically, the Nats seem to represent a remnant of an early form of animism in which the Nats were tree or nature spirits. It is interesting to note the manner in which U Myaing blends the two religious systems. The Nats control earthly happenings, and the Buddhist structure the eternal. We are concerned with identifying some of the major practices, but primarily with the differentiation between religious practices in [178] Pantanaw and in the refugee camp.

Nats.

The problem of the Nats come up in our study by the appearance of 776 a bamboo pole split so as to form a small basket at one end. This 782 object, called a KYAUNG ZAUNG rested on the roof of the camp hut next to U Myaing's. An interview in which Daw Aw Zar (.D.A.Z.) and U Myaing (U.M.) discussed Nats, is given in its entirety below because it reveals the rather vague feelings of "superstition" held of the Nats on the one hand and their potency on the other.

Q. No. 25 (photograph) is a split bamboo pole with a basket at the top. What is this called and what is it used for?

A. (D.A.Z.) KYAUNG ZAUNG. The thing he took from the roof and photographed? It is called a KYAUNG ZAUNG.
(U.M.) It is called KYAUNG ZAUNG.

Q. How do you use it ?

A. (D.A.Z.) We offer to U SHIN GYI and others. Offerings to Nats. Didn't you hear that big man speak? (To U Myaing).

Q. Who made this object? Who makes them?

A. (D.A.Z.) The people who give the offerings of course.

Q. Do you have to make these when you give offerings?

A. If we give offerings we make them.

Addenda

U Myaing is not a member of any political party. He is concerned mainly with his work and the daily task of providing food for his family. He does not belong to any union or other organisation of workers. 621● 722 622

There are about 1500 people in the refugee camp living in 14 or 15 buildings. The schoolmaster is regarded as a leader. There are two others who help him- Maung Myint and Aung Gyi. Maung Myint is 48 years old and Aung Gyi is 37. The young men in the camp also recognise these three people as elders. The three of them undertake all responsibilities for dealing with the government and making representations to the government regarding rice, milk-powder, etc. They are not paid anything in money, but get a larger share in the allotments of food, etc., made by the government to the camp. "If we get one condensed milk tin of rice, they get one basket." All the other members of the camp , including U Myaing, are satisfied with this arrangement since these three have been doing the work for the past two years. The Chief Justice of the Union, U E Maung asked them to undertake this responsibility for the camp.

In the case of thieves who are caught, the government comes to 625 arrest the thieves. If the people in the camp catch a thief, they would tell him and only afterwards settle with the government. It was the same back in Pathwe when a thief was caught. Even if he did not die he would have to suffer terribly. In Pathwe it was the task of the headman to take the offender to the police station, but here in camp the station is quite near and the householder can take him to the station by himself.

The government works through the school-master. It gives him 621 recognition as a leader in the affairs of the camp. Maung Myint has 641 to look after the welfare of two sheds and their inmates, Aung Gyi has [illegible], and Ko Ba Khant the school-master has the charge of the

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remaining huts. They have lists of the people in their charge. Maung Nyunt and Aung Gyi are under the school-master, who is the most important and influential man of all. These people have to see to the DHANI thatch roof, the bamboo, etc., and if there are any repairs needed they get together, estimate the cost , and then go to the government authorities. U Myaing does not know which office they go to.

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The phongyis resident in the camp do not participate in the secular life of the camp, beyond giving the SILAS and coming occasionally for HSOON. In Pathwe village there were small boys whom they taught - thirty or forty of them, but in camp they do not help to educate the young. People go to these phongyis in camp on holy days, to take the SILAS. They do not even preach to the laity. This U Myaing thinks to be due to the fact that they do not know how to, being themselves refugees from country villages.

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On the 8th and 15th day of the waxing moon and the 8th and 15th day of the waning moon, the four holy days of the month, Daw Aw Zar goes to the Shwe Dagon to say her prayers. U Myaing cannot do likewise because he has to go to work.

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U Myaing has very little dealing with the government. They do not come for taxes, and in fact even have to provide the refugees with items of food and apparel. The people in the camp are not members of a closely knit organisation. They are made up of workers and families all thrown together by the exigencies of the political situation. The three mentioned above are the only ones in the whole camp. who have charge of the camp welfare. They take the responsibility for disposing of the bucket sewage and the dirt accumulated in and around the camp. They arrange for government sweepers to come for these. There have been no fire drills or any such exercise held in the camp.

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In Rangoon the family has few entertainments. There was once a government film show screened in the camp, and the other night Ma Khin Myein went with some friends to a nearby pagoda to see a lantern slide show of Buddha's Relics. They have never seen a modern Burmese play or PYIZAT. As Daw Aw Zar expressed it, "How can we go and see one when the charge for admission is a rupee

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for an adult and 8 annas for a child."

The whole family goes to the ANYEIN or marionette shows which are quite rare and sometimes not even seen in a year. If it is held 536
this is held during the months of TAGU, KASON and TAZAUNGMON. In the villages an ANYEIN gives over at about one or two in the morning.

The people from their village also go over to Karen villages 536
when they have puppet shows at cremation ceremonies. Some of the 764
Karens bury their dead and after three or four years they exhume the corpse to burn the bones and store the ashes away. At the ceremony for the cremation of the bones they stage these puppet shows and the members of U Myaing's family go to witness them.

In Pathwe the PYAZAT (stage performance or PWE) has not yet made an appearance. Ma Aye 536
Myaing had seen it in another village where she had to pay an admission charge of four annas. This was the only time she had seen it. On that occasion the show was followed by an enactment of one [779]
of the birth stories of Buddha and this went on till morning.

CHILDREN'S GAMES:

The children used to play several games. One of these was to 524
blind-fold one of their number and set him off in the direction of 857
an iron bar suspended about 25 yards away. The blindfolded boy was given an iron rod and it was his task to try and hit the suspended bar with his rod.

These games were played at a sports meeting organized for [621]
children and everyone in the village turned out to watch. Another item was the candle race where the children were given a lighted candle each and made to run a race. Then there was a cock fighting contest where two girls sat back on their haunches, faced each other and began to swing each knee forward alternatively until one or the other gave up. There was also a needle and thread race, a sack race, a one-legged race and an egg and spoon race. Each of these races were confined to only two contestants at a time.

GONYIN:- A GONYIN is the large flat seed and is used in a game that Burmese children play - U Myaing's children included. There have to be ten players, five a side and each side has to try and hit the seeds belonging to the opposing group according to complicated rules.

In Pathwe the children used to play marbles and not the youths [369]
as is sometimes found in Rangoon. In Pathwe the adults were all

These are his "eggs" and it is his duty to guard them while the others cluster around trying to get them away from him without being caught in the attempt. If they are successful in getting all the eggs away they then go and hide them. The "turtle" then has to go and look for eggs while the rest follow her giving encouragement clapping hands and shouting the chant " LEIT U PY UK LO LEIT MA SHAR THU KHIN HYAR NGO ME NGO MET (Because her eggs are lost the poor female turtle is tearfully looking for them). If the child succeeds in catching any one in an attempt to get an egg away that person becomes the turtle. 527 858

In Pathwe they celebrated the water festival, but they did it in moderation and were satisfied if a person got slightly wet. MEN-LET-HSAUNG was given in the village. 527

U Myaing did not save any money in Pathwe. Sometimes he made a great deal of money and sometimes he made nothing at all. Sometimes if he had a lot of money he would loan it out to some one else to be returned in three or four months time if possible. Sometimes these loans continued unsettled for about a year. Only in Rangoon do you have to pay interest. In Pathwe if you did not borrow from chettiars you did not need to pay any interest. U Myaing did not go to the chettiars. He borrowed only from his relatives. There were people who went to raise money from the chettiar money lenders and some of them lost house, cultivation fields etc. because they could not pay the high rate of interest and had the mortgages on their property foreclosed. 454 426 [563]

Analysis of Social and Ceremonial Activities

The refugee camp may be regarded as a new village composed of families who came from villages in the delta similar to Pathwe but placed in an urban setting. The other refugees have the same understandings as to socio-ceremonial activities as U Myaing and the basic 621 722 [369]

621 722 structure of the social and political organization is the same in both places. However, the expectations and obligations of the original village are ill defined perhaps for the reason that the camp families no longer depend so completely on each other for their social and ceremonial activities. In Pathwe, U Myaing and his family were responsible citizens of the village as a whole. In camp, they are merely temporary residents with only the most rudimentary of obligations to their fellow refugees. The basic functions of the camp are carried out by semi-official persons. There is a minimum of feeling of solidarity in the camp where the immediate family is the major functioning unit.

Much has been lost with the passing of the communal activities of the small village. Yet the basic social and ceremonial activities [181] are still carried out in Rangoon. The community has become a large, impersonal one but the values are the same. The activities, as at the gigantic Shwe Dagon pagoda, duplicate those of the village on a grand scale and are hence more stimulating - but the family is no longer in a special status position and are nameless and unknown in their activities. Because of lack of money the activities are greatly curtailed in scope, but also the obligation is less. In this sense the family is "freed" from pressing obligations of the village where, for example, they were expected to contribute relatively large sums to community activities.

621 722 369 517 The familiar and beloved flavour of routine village activities is replaced by the excitment of life in the big town. Everything is new and different and while the basic understandings are still encountered the old restrictions of the small community have disappeared. Life in Rangoon is full of possibilities and amusement.

369 555 [465] Recently (during the summer of 1951) U Myaing was promoted from street cleaner to boss of the cleaners of one section. He still gets a salary of Rs. 86/- a month but has the position of an overseer somewhat equivalent in status to the IN overseer's job in Pathwe. There are many opportunities for an honest and intelligent person to rise in Rangoon. In October 1951 U Myaing visited me to take an order for table mats. His samples were much too large and bound with a violent

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gives important data on the process of urbanizing villagers - the country people are an important group in the growth of the Burmese section of Rangoon; probably a large section of the present refugee population will stay in the future.

The concepts of pattern of living and standard of living: The Burmese pattern of living, or any culture pattern, is a universe of beliefs and practices manifested in acts and artifacts. The analogy of the "Universe" is a useful one in that it recognises a guiding body of understandings that controls the whole of the society (like "laws" of Universe) while emphasizing the particular understandings that govern the various groups or classes of the society (like the "laws" of the Solar and other systems within the Universe). The "solar systems" are the standard levels of operations forming a comprehensive set of forces within itself. Families, like U Myaing's have a mobility, in the case understudy a forced change, which takes them out of one standard system into another. The adjustments which they undergo reflects the "laws" which control the various standard levels as well as the basic concepts controlling the whole of the society.

Each belief and practice has a range of expressions which can be defined. The particular expression practiced by a family is the standard or level of a phenomenon capable of expansion or contraction within prescribed limits. The ultimate limits are defined by the total range of expressions for the culture as a whole. But the practical limits for a family are defined by the possibilities of the society segment (community) in which they find themselves. Thus, the range of U Myaing's possibilities of expression are much greater in Rangoon than they were in Pathwe and greatly exceed his original ideas of what was possible. He may, for example, become a highly westernised political leader - although this seems unlikely in terms of his expectations. The westernised, urban spheres of Burmese culture is now opened to the family.

U Myaing is motivated by the basic expectations of the Burmese culture at a level applicable to his situation in terms of the possibilities of his social environment. In Pathwe, he was a fisherman and aspired to those things that fishermen should. In camp, he was at

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181 565 555 first a bewildered refugee, but gradually assumed the role of a labourer rising in the ranks. The case indicates the mobility of the Burmese family and shows clearly that it may function successfully outside of the confines of its original social atmospherc.

182 594 ●621 156 The family in Burmese society: The successful mobility of U Myaing's family indicate that the immediate family is the primary social unit of Burmese society. The Burmese community is then a congregation of immediate families who engage in activities of mutual benefit within the protective framework of the village structure. This interpretation high lights a particular type of individualism which is a family individualism depending on the roles of each [779] member of the family for its full expression. This concept seems tied to the Buddhist idea of individual salvation through acts of merit on the one hand and the exigencies of gaining a livelihood on the other. [474] The family is the basic economic unit and though it will enter cooperative endeavours (like the IN fisherics, or communal nat propitiations), has the ultimate responsibility and capabilities of support- [596] ing itself. The extended family is important, as indeed is the total village social structure, only in so far as it contributes to the maintenance of the individual immediate family of procreation including spouses, offspring and aged parents. The "looseness" of the social structure conversely allows mobility of the immediate families. This analysis indicates that attempts at modernising of the Burmese people (acculturation) should meet with a minimum of structural obstacles - such as caste, clan and rigid associations might present.

181 156 369 555 The Burmese culture pattern and the individual: The village culture pattern is dominated by a series of relatively simple, interrelated ideas held by all. Each individual feels himself temporily occupying a particular situation which is only one of many existences and but an instant in eternity. He is fated to be a member of a particular family with a set of opportunities through life. Life should be pleasant and must be virtuous if future existences are to be pleasant. He must realise as fully as possible the talents and opportunities that come to him through his KARMA situation. In the villages this concept is a great stabilising force and tends to make an individual content with

21: Htin Aung E-5 (ca. 1930) 1937 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

scenes. Still later, the scenes came to be taken from one story only, so that a whole story was given by the pageant. Dresses became quite gorgeous and the scheme elaborate. The pageant now needed organization. Therefore, the village came to be divided into two parts, eastern and western quarters or northern and southern quarters (the village was usually greater in length than breadth, being built along a main road). In larger villages and towns, the division was into four quarters. Each quarter was responsible for the production of a pageant. There was intense rivalry between the quarters to produce the finest pageant; it was usually friendly, but often enmity arose, and many pageants were occasions for free fights. The rivalry further developed the pageant, for new ideas would be introduced by one quarter to outrival the others. Soon the pageant became a play, its scenes coming to life.

The *Nibhathkhin* was the Burmese equivalent of the English miracle and mystery plays. It was the pageant come to life. With the pageant, the religious processions went along the main streets without stopping, each cart representing a set scene. But with the *Nibhathkhin*, each cart stopped at certain places. The most common of such places were the market-place, the house of the chief administrative officer, and the pagoda where the procession ended. At each of those places, each cart stopped, and the scene came to life. Dialogue and action were used. Therefore, people at the stopping places saw what was in effect a play.

The *Nibhathkhin* was extremely popular, and it lived on until recently, just as many of the English miracle plays continued to be produced right through the Elizabethan period. I saw one in the out-of-the-way town of Pauk as recently as 1916. However, I do not think that *Nibhathkhins* are produced anywhere nowadays. Sometimes one sees a procession on cars and motor lorries as a sort of reminiscence of the *Nibhathkhin*. But such processions are mere shows and lack the essential features of the Burmese miracle plays.

It was for the entertainment of the populace that the *Nibhathkhin* came into being, and as the Burmese entertainment connotes laughter, soon the element of humour came into the *Nibhathkhin*. At first none of the characters was made humorous, for they all came out of religious stories. And so the clown was introduced. The clown or *Lu-byet* ('the non-serious man') was put into the *Nibhathkhin* as an extra character, an attendant on the prince-hero. He was extremely popular, and soon another clown, an attendant on the princess-heroine,

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
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168. VILLAGE CAUSEWAY IN THE TIDAL REGION.

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the village head-man or other functionary, and round about, the houses of the villagers in more or less regular rows. The village streets are broad and in some places the houses are well-spaced, with plots of fruit-trees and vegetable-gardens between and at the back. No care is bestowed on the roads except in a few riverain localities and tidal regions, where embanked roads and brick causeways are necessary. Trees are planted in front of the houses—cocoanut and betel palms, giant bamboo, the evergreens, tamarind, mango, and jack, for their fruit and shade: *gangaw*, *sagâ*, and *padauk* for their shade and scented flowers: *mèzali*, *zi*, and several *ficus* species. The screw-pine and various ornamental shrubs are cultivated—*tarôssaga* (*frangipani*, No. 92), *sènanya*, gardenias, and roses. *Palma Christi* (castor-oil plant) is common for hedges. Plants cultivated by Europeans in the tropics—crotons, begonias, caladiums, balsams—are spreading everywhere. Pot-gardening is becoming a feature of the villages and even of the raft-houses and boats.

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Well received as the stranger is by the people of the village, he has to brave the displeasure of the village curs. The dogs are the scavengers of the settlements, together with the crows and the myriads of ants. The termites ("white ants") account for the dry vegetable refuse, but they also invade the dwellings and destroy dry wood, mats, and thatch. Cats attach themselves to houses in the same way as dogs. A peculiarity of the domestic cat of Burma is

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169. VILLAGE RIVER-FRONT.

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
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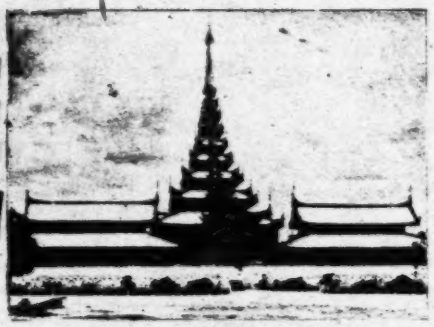

380. PALACE FRONT AND SPIRE.

The British administration preserves the native official machinery, from the *thadyt* to the *myoôk*, augmenting the numbers so as to reach every part of the area and curtailing the powers. Under native *régime* even *thadyts* might be *dâbaing*. The new *régime* takes account of the village *lûdyts* for the sake of their moral influence; many of them have been invested with power to compose differences up to small amounts, and some of the more prominent are honorary magistrates. Independent spirit is on the increase; the officials have to reckon with a new temper in the people. Nevertheless, in municipal councils the supineness and complaisance of the native members are calculated to stultify the position accorded to them. Road-making and sanitation do not arouse their interest, and the local excise, the matter they long to deal with, is excluded from their jurisdiction (*cf.* p. 157). The *thadyt* personally measures the fields, collects the land-tax and poll-tax from house to house, in such a circle as he can make the circuit of twice a year, and receives commission on the amount. He reports on matters within his circle. As many revenue-circles as a native magistrate can personally control are united into a township, under a *myoôk*, who at the same time supervises the co-ordinate grades of police distributed in the township. He publicly tries criminal and civil cases, under his powers as magistrate, by codes of law and procedure accessible to everybody. These codes form the most valuable models of system, in the vernacular, up to the present. By their help both judges and advocates have trained themselves in law. Five to eight townships, according to facilities for

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381. BURMAN PRINCESS.

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invariably in the same posture, seated, with one arm across his lap. The whole atmosphere is one of ordered, unhurried peace, whether within the timbered buildings, or within the surrounding compound.

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But the monastery is seldom far away from the village, and this is of set purpose. The Buddhist *Saṃgha* in Burma might well be described as a teaching Order. "Of all charities, charity of learning is the noblest," observes a Buddhist layman,[27] and the monastery dispenses this charity freely. It provides the village school. There the boys learn to read and write. There, moreover, they are tutored in Buddhist lore, with a firm emphasis on ethical requirements. They learn the 'three Jewels' which enjoin reverence for the Buddha, the Law *(Dhamma)*, and the Order, and the five precepts -- not to kill, not to steal, not to lie, not to commit adultery, not to drink intoxicants. In the *Mingalā Thot* or "Song of Great Blessing," which they recite by heart[28], they learn that a wise and good man will seek to store up merit by fulfilling his domestic duties, by giving ample alms, by seeking 'self-knowledge' and by learning from holy men 'as chance affords.' The monastic ideal of utter renunciation, 'from all attachment free', is also indicated and 'Nirvana here' is said to be 'true happiness' leading to the Highest Bliss.[29] They will also learn stories of the Buddha's previous birth from the *Jātakas*, and, above all, the story of the historic Buddha.

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But attendance at the day school is not their only initiation in the faith. Every Burman boy, at the age of puberty or earlier, is expected to leave home and become a boarder at the monastery for a period which may vary from weeks to years. "A Buddhist who has not been a *koyin* (novice) or donned the yellow robe," remarks a Burmese writer, "is looked upon as one who has missed the most essential (part) of his experience in this world." The village school often appears to be a merry jumble to the outsider, but during this time as a novice "each boy gets individual attention.... There is a wholesome atmosphere of intimacy and understanding between the teacher and the taught." Most of the novices return to secular life, but some remain to become fully ordained monks.[30]

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The *shin-byu* ceremony, or rite of confirmation, which is another essential in the Burmese boy's initiation, generally precedes his entry to

[27] U Set, "Life in a *Phongyi Kyaung*," *Rangoon Times*, (May 13, 1931).

[28] See Appendix for fuller account of this Song and other Monastic instruction.

[29] "To understand the literature, 'serious' or popular, of Burma we cannot know the Pali Jātaka too well," M. H. Bode, *The Pali Literature of Burma*, chap. v, pp. 81, 82.

[30] U Set, op. cit.; cf. Scott, *The Burman*, Vol. I, chaps. II, III, and IV.

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Old men will retire to the monastery to end their days there, and younger men, in poverty or other distress, will flee the world for a time. The hospitality of the monks has sometimes been more charitable than discriminate, a circumstances which has brought some monasteries into disrepute, for these temporary inhabitants are allowed to wear the yellow robe, and some are criminals, sheltering from justice. Father Sangermano reports the rescue of prisoners condemned to death. "In thus saving the lives of criminals, (the monks) believe that, as their law forbids them to kill, it must be meritorious to preserve the lives of others."[34]

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The monastery is the social centre of the village. Buddhism in Burma is gaily attired, a religion of festival. Frequently there will be an open-air performance in the moonlight, when a birth-story of the Buddha is dramatized. All this spirited, colourful life gathers around the monastery.

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But perhaps the Order's most valuable service to the community is the function fulfilled by the monk as *counsellor*. A group of villagers may gather for a special instruction, others may attend when the monks assemble for devotions, but the monastery is not regarded as a preaching centre or as a place of public worship. In modern times, crowds have flocked to hear the Monyin Sayadaw. Generally, however, the approach in this respect is individual. It is as the individual adviser of each villager that the monk's influence is most strongly felt.

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In many and tangible ways, therefore, the monastery serves the community, but it is probable that the villager himself reveres the monk more for services which are intangible and may not appear so valuable to sceptical observers. Early in the morning, the monk, attended by *koyins*, will go the round of the faithful, receiving their offerings of rice in his begging bowl.[35] For the monk himself it is an exercise in humility, for the villager it is one of the chief means of increasing that *kutho* or worthiness which ensures him happiness in this life and the next.[36]

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Most of all, however, it is those very aspects of the monk's vocation which distinguish him from the rest of the community, setting him apart, for which the monk is chiefly esteemed. It is because the greater part of his life is spent in spiritual exercises which the villagers do *not* share, that they value him most. The monastery stands for a Way of utter renun-

[34] *The Burmese Empire*, 3d. Edition, ed. J. Jardine, (London, 1895), chap. xv, p. 122.

[35] Thus *bhikku* or *bhikṣu*, usually translated monk, means, literally, mendicant. Strictly speaking, a *bhikku* is not a monk; cf. Rhys Davids, *Dialogues of the Buddha*, Part II (S.B.B.), p. 81, footnote.

[36] *Kutho* is frequently translated 'merit.' But 'worthiness' is more accurate.

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term 'beautiful' is here significant.[50] A Burmese *pwè* or open-air variety performamce will begin at dusk and sustain a frolic of wit and dance until the morning, and the same vivacity informs the frequent religious pageants and dramas. If the underlying Buddhism is indeed pessimism, it is at least 'touched with hope and mysticism.'[51]

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Fielding Hall has suggested that there is an element of Nature-mysticism in the Burman's outlook. Both his Animism and his Buddhism encourage him to believe that he is intimately related to all Nature: Buddhism because it will allow no separate souls but sees all Life as one; Animism because "legends and tales, the spirits of hills and rivers, of the trees and flowers" express the fact that "Life is a great whole."[52]

A Nature poem by a fifteenth century Burmese Buddhist may be regarded as some corroboration of this estimate. The writer conceives all Nature doing homage to the Buddha:

"A clamour of colour fills the vernal woods.
Tender fruits peep from the budded quicks.
Mellow clusters, luscious as ambrosia, sway in the air....
The acid lime, the delicious custard-apple, the juicy mango, the restless *petthet* and the riotous *grewia*
Rush to render their homage to the thrice-adored Sage."[53]

In his later work,[54] Fielding Hall seems to equate Burmese Buddhism with a vague and woolly pantheism in which all tigers are lambs and all roads lead to truth, but at least he sees the poetry of Burmese life and religion. Later reflection led him to correct the view contained in his *Soul of a People* that the Burmese feeling for Nature was separate from their Buddhism.[55] Instead, he now discerned a fusion giving colour and buoyancy to their faith. "Here was the world the Greeks had lived in. All the gods yet lived to those who still had ears to hear their voices in the forest sounds, eyes to see them flitting through the darkened woods or bathing in the mountain pools.... Were the trees alive? Surely they were. They had their life, they were not dead unlovely things, but living." Comparison with Greek ideas has occurred to others. Greek gods and Burmese *Nats* are similarly very human and capricious, it is suggested.

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The Greek comparison recurs to mind when we consider a further aspect of Burmese Buddhism — its social, with which may be joined

[50] "The Women of Burma." *Buddhism*, Vol. I, No. 1, (Rangoon).
[51] *M.B.B.*, p. 10.
[52] H. Fielding Hall, *The Inward Light*, chap. III, p. 24.
[53] "The 'Tawla' of Shin Uttamagyaw," ed. by U. Po Byu, free trans. by Maung Ba Han. *J.B.R.S.*, Vol. VII, pt. II, (1917).
[54] *The Inward Light*.
[55] *Ibid.*, pp. 6, 7, 24; cf. *The Soul of a People*, chap. XX, pp. 269 ff.

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its national, character. The frequent festivals not only enliven, they express and stabilise the community life. They are often local, but certain shrines, such as the Shwe Dagon Pagoda in Rangoon, have become centres of pilgrimage. In a country which has had a strong tendency to de-centralization — the king's authority was often very weak — the Buddhist Order has made for cohesion, and, in modern times, Buddhist monks have been active in the movement for national independence.

In spite, however, of this social expression, Buddhism in Burma, as elsewhere, is very much a matter of *individual* concern. We have seen this individualism within the monastery. It is equally marked outside the monastery. One of the most popular *zats* is the story of Wethandaya, who, in order to gain his own salvation, gives away his wife and family to a rapacious Brahmin.[56] "Each must bear his own burden," is a favourite quotation.[57] Its primary reference may be to moral responsibility.

This brings us to the decidely *ethical* character of Burmese Buddhism. *Kutho* (worthiness) is the central concept here, and "it is clear that the Burmese Buddhists have a more *mathematical* conception of Merit than other folk." "The ordinary belief is very concrete — so many good deeds mean so much to one's credit in another world."[58] Sometimes very material rewards are indicated. "The reward for building a monastery is a palace in a *Nat* heaven with seven towers, and in this palace dwell seven hundred *Nat* wives.... For a gift of sticks for use in a bath room, the donor will be reborn with perfumed body."[59]

Almsgiving is a sure means of 'heaping up *Kutho*.' Since the benefit accruing to the donor partly depends on the worthiness of the object, the maintenance of religion is a valued means of self-help. Hence the many pagodas. Hence the gifts to the monasteries. There is no more coveted title than 'Builder of Monasteries.' Hence, too, the welcome to the monk as he comes in the early morning with his begging bowl. The monk may seem to be the chief recipient. But in the things which matter, he is the donor.

Though others may thus provide the opportunity, essentially the activity is self-help. Emphasis is laid on individual responsibility. It is something a man must do for himself.

It is something he *can* do. Thus the conception of *Kutho* challenges any animistic idea that man is altogether at the mercy of capricious spirits.

[56] *M.B.B.*, pp. 44, 103.
[57] *M.B.B.*, p. 45.
[58] *M.B.B.*, p. 51, p. 76. The usual, though inadequate translation of Kutho, as already observed, is Merit.
[59] *M.B.B.*, p. 51.

23: Benedict
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/For lists of kinship terms, and for excellent and detailed information concerning correlations between kinship terminology, patterns of behavior, and social institutions, see category 601./